

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L PEKING 0169

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT CH

SUBJ: HUA KUO-FENG LAUNCHES PUBLIC RELATIONS BLITZ

1. SUMMARY. ON THE EVE OF THE 5TH NATIONAL PEOPLE'S CONGRESS HUA KUO-FENG AND HIS SUPPORTERS HAVE APPARENTLY LAUNCHED A MEDIA BLITZE CALCULATED TO INCREASE HIS VISIBILITY AND ENHANCE HIS IMAGE AS A TRUE SUCCESSOR TO CHAIRMAN MAO. IN RECENT DAYS HE HAS VISITED TANGSHAN AND CHATTED WITH MINERS; GIVEN HIS APPROVAL FOR A NEW "CHOU EN-LAI" LOCOMOTIVE; CONTRIBUTED HIS CALLIGRAPHIC INSCRIPTIONS TO THE LOCOMOTIVE, TO A LITERARY CONFERENCE, AND TO A SESSION OF METALLURGICAL INDUSTRY REPRESENTATIVES; MET THE AUSTRALIAN COMMUNIST PARTY LEADER; AND BEEN LAUDED AGAIN FOR HIS INSPIRATIONAL STINT OF PHYSICAL LABOR AT MIYUN RESERVOIR. END SUMMARY.

2. ON THE EVE OF THE 5TH NATIONAL PEOPLE'S CONGRESS, WHICH WILL DECIDE INTER ALIA THE QUESTION OF RESTORING A CHIEF OF
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STATE POSITION AND THE IDENTITY OF THE PREMIER, THERE SEEMS TO BE OCCURRING A FINAL JOCKEYING AMONG THE LEADERSHIP FOR POLITICAL ADVANTAGE. TENG HSIAO-PING WHO MANY BELIEVE SEEKS THE PREMIERSHIP FOR HIMSELF, HAS DOMINATED THE PERSONNEL APPOINTMENT PROCESS; IN THE PROVINCES AND THE CAPITAL ALIKE IT IS DIFFICULT TO IDENTIFY A SINGLE RECENT APPOINTEE WHO IS NOT A LONG TIME ASSOCIATE AND SUPPORTER OF

TENG. IT IS A SAFE BET THAT TENG WILL ALSO DOMINATE THE NPC.

3. IN RESPONSE TO THIS, PERHAPS, HUA KUO-FENG AND HIS SUPPORTERS HAVE APPARENTLY LAUNCHED A MEDIA BLITZ CALCULATED TO IMPROVE HUA'S VISIBILITY AND ENHANCE HIS IMAGE AS CHAIRMAN MAO'S TRUE SUCCESSOR. SINCE THE BEGINNING OF THE YEAR HUA HAS:

- CHATTED WITH TANGSHAN MINERS ON NEW YEAR'S DAY AND JANUARY 2, WHEN "THE WHOLE COUNTRY WAS CELEBRATING THE HOLIDAY";
- DECIDED TO NAME A SHANGHAI LOCOMOTIVE AFTER CHOU EN-LAI;
- CONTRIBUTED HIS CALLIGRAPHIC INSCRIPTIONS TO THE LOCOMOTIVE (THEREBY ASSOCIATING HIMSELF WITH PREMIER CHOU), TO THE JOURNAL PEOPLE'S LITERATURE, AND TO A MEETING OF DELEGATES OF THE METALLURGICAL INDUSTRY;
- MET DELEGATES TO SEVERAL NATIONAL CONFERENCES BEING HELD IN PEKING;
- MET AUSTRALIAN COMMUNIST PARTY LEADER HILL; AND
- BEEN LAUDED ONCE AGAIN FOR HIS INSPIRATIONAL STINT OF PHYSICAL LABOR AT MIYUN RESERVOIR (WHEN TENG HAD BEEN ABSENT).

4. THE NET EFFECT OF ALL THIS HAS BEEN TO PERMIT DOMINATION OF THE FRONT PAGES OF PEKING NEWSPAPERS BY HUA. THROUGH THE MIDDLE OF JANUARY HUA'S PICTURE OF HIS THOUGHTS HAVE APPEARED MORE OFTEN IN THE UPPER RIGHT HAND CORNER OF CONFIDENTIAL

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PEOPLE'S DAILY THAN HAVE THOSE OF CHAIRMAN MAO.

5. TENG HSIAO-PING ALSO MANAGED TO INSERT HIS OWN THOUGHTS INTO THAT SPACE OF THE PEOPLE'S DAILY FOR THE FIRST TIME. ON JANUARY 14, THE SECOND ANNIVERSARY OF THE PEKING MEMORIAL CEREMONY FOR CHOU EN-LAI, A COUPLE OF LINES FROM TENG'S FUNERAL ORATION APPEARED THERE. WE ARE INCLINED TO SEE THIS AS A LOGICAL RIPOSTE BY TENG TO HUA'S MEDIA BLITZ -- A JUSTIFIABLE EFFORT TO REMIND ALL THAT TENG WAS CHOU EN-LAI'S CLOSE ASSOCIATE AND HANDPICKED SUCCESSOR AS PREMIER.

6. COMMENT: WE DO NOT SUGGEST THAT HUA KUO-FENG IS IN CONTROL OF THE MEDIA; INSTITUTIONALLY, TENG'S MEN OR PRESUMED NEUTRALS ARE IN CHARGE OF ALL KEY PROPAGANDA ORGANS. BUT HUA'S RECENT ACTIONS -- ALL LEGITIMATE ACTIVITIES OF A PARTY CHAIRMAN WHICH DEMAND NATIONAL PUBLICITY --- HAVE BEEN CLEVERLY DESIGNED TO GET FRONT PAGE ATTENTION. ONE OF THE FIRST ACCUSATIONS MADE AGAINST THE GANG OF FOUR WAS THAT THEY HAD FILED TO "PROPAGANDIZE" HUA, SPECIFICALLY THAT HEY HAD RESISTED PUBLICIZING HIS CONCERN FOR TANGSHAN QUAKE VICTIMS. TO DOWNPLAY HUA'S RECENT VISIT THERE, OR TO MINIMIZE THE IMPORTANCE

OF HIS HORTATORY INSCRIPTIONS, WOULD IMMEDIATELY RECALL
THE GANG OF FOUR'S MAINPULATION OF THE MEDIA FOR
FACTIONAL ENDS. THIS WOULD IN TURN PRECIPITATE A
CONFRONTATION THAT ALL PRESUMABLY WISH TO AVOID ON THE
EVE OF THE NPC.

7. WHETHER HUA'S HIGHLY VISIBILITY IN THE MEDIA CAN BE
TRANSLATED INTO CONCRETE POLITICAL ADVANTAGE -- SPECIFICALLY
HIS RETENTION OF THE PREMIERSHIP -- AT THE NPC IS
QUESTIONABLE, HOWEVER. NO MATTER HOW MUCH SYMPATHY FOR
HIS PERSONALITY AND LEADERSHIP IS GENERATED, A DETERMINED
TENG COULD SURELY WREST THE PREMIERSHIP FROM HUA IF HE
CALCULATED THAT THE POLITICAL PRICE WAS WORTH PAYING. HUA'S
MEDIA BLITZ MERELY RAISES THE ANTE.
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